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POEMS AND TRANSLATIONS.

POEMS

AND

TRANSLATIONS

BY

BESSIE CRAIGMYLE

"They came to me, dreaming in class-time,
As truant of hand as of tongue"

ABERDEEN
J. & J. P. EDMOND & SPARK
1886

LOAN STACK

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POEMS.

A DEDICATION.

M. G. D.

FRIEND, no longer are we together:
Now, in this sweet September weather,
  You stand in the shade of the Pampas sunflowers,
My feet are crushing the Scottish heather.

Here, on the hill where the wind blows keen,
I remember only what once hath been,
  I forget the change of the changing seasons,
And the thousand miles of sea between.

Two years have passed of the dreary three.
If they strive to stay you across the sea,
  It may be the love that breathes in my verses
Will bring you back to home and to me.

Only through your sweet favour and grace,
Was I ever worthy to hold the place
  I held with you. But, though you may alter,
In the heart of my heart I keep your face.

And if, in your distant Southern clime,
You care not for feeble and faulty rhyme,
  You will care, at least, for the gift I bring you,
A love more strong than distance or time.

LOVE'S RESURRECTION.

I MADE a grave for Love two years ago,
  With tearless eyes I covered up my dead,
And over it I piled the winter snow.
  "Love has no resurrection"—So I said.

Ah! friend, can I forget? How changed I seem!
  Now, when our Northern spring-tide wakes the land,
I stand beside the grave; and yet I dream
  Love's resurrection very near at hand.

CLEOBIS AND BITON.

ἐπειρώτα δ Κροισος τίνα δεύτερον ὀλβιώτατον ἴδοί, δ Σολων εἶπε "Κλέοβιν τε καὶ Βίτωνα."—*Herodotus* I., 31.

LONG ere the sword-strokes rang round wide-wayed Troy,
Or Homer's rhyme made beautiful the world,
In Herè's honour, Argos held a feast.
From the wide marshes of the Lernæ-fen,
To where Troezen fronts the wine-dark sea,
Hellenes crowded to the games that day.

They wrestled on through the hot summer noon,
And tossed the quoit, and urged the flying car,
And tried the racer-toil with bare, brown limbs;
Then, when the prizes of the day were given,
Flung themselves down till the soft even should come,
Bringing the feast, and closing with the dance,
Where the white feet of golden-haired Greek girls
Should wear the night in measure with their own.
The giant with the wrestler's olive crown
Broke silence with—"Sharp struggle that of ours,
Tellus, but I have won, and wear, the wreath."

But Tellus, sullen yet from his defeat,
Checked him with—"An' if Cleobis were here,
You had not won to-day." And, where the ring
Of the quoit-throwers sat beneath the trees,
They talked of last year's games and Biton's cast,
"Ten feet beyond the furthest throw to-day—
Why is he absent?"
From the wood there came
A car piled high with fleeces and with skins,
Dragged by two youths, with painful steps and slow,
On which a matron sat, with long white hair
And eyes that brightened, as she saw the crowd
Who pressed around with noisy questionings,
"Why come ye late?" "Why draw the car yourselves?"
"Where are your cattle?" Loosened from the yoke
The brothers stood, cheeks flushed, lips panting yet,
For sore had been their labour through the heat,
On roads where the fierce sun struck down swordlike
On their uncovered heads. The elder spake,
Lifting his mother meanwhile from her place,
With clasp as tender as a woman's touch:
"Our mother longed to see the games, you know,

Therefore we promised her, drew forth the car,
And heaped it full of skins and fleeces black,
So she might sit the softer. Then we went
Into the shed where our two cattle stood,
Up to the flank in clover-scented grass,
But yestereven, meaning to lead them forth,
To harness them. The bulls lay sick in stall.
What could we do? Her heart was set on this.
So we two dragged the car for lack of bulls.
We have lost the wreath;—but then she has her wish.
The games are past? Are none before the shrine?
Then we will go within and sleep till even.
This strains the limbs more than the athlete's toil—
We are sore wearied." Then the brothers turned,
Entered the temple. But the mother went
With them within, to where the image stood,
Of the great goddess, on the lips a smile
Divine-compassionate. She clasped her hands,
And knelt before Saturnia's shrine, and prayed:

"Mistress and goddess, thou rememberest
That I, a maiden, crowned thy shrine with wreaths,

And through the years that brought me motherhood—
Without which pain a woman's bliss is naught—
Worshipped, not loved, thee less. And now I come,
Knowing the gods forget not service done,
To ask a gift—yet know not what to ask,
Being a woman, and most ignorant
Save in my love for these. How can I ask?
I know not what is best for these, my boys,
Or beautiful enough. Choose thou for me,
Give them the fairest gift thou hast to give!"
And Herè heard and hearkened up in heaven.

Then Zeus spake straightway to his sister-bride—
"What wilt thou give, O Herè, O my wife?
The ruler's crown would crush such bright brave brows.
Give them the herdsman's joy, rich pasture lands,
And length of days stretched out among the folk,
With children's children sitting on their knees.
Then, after some swift stroke of sudden death,
Set them to shine amid the stars in heaven,
To shine, steel-like, throughout the winter nights,
So that the sailor on the Ægean Sea

Shall turn from the veiled twins to steer by them—
And all men say, "Blessed be Cleobis
And Biton."
White-armed Herè turned her eyes
Slow upon Zeus and answered, "If thou care
For those strong sons of thine, thou wilt do well,
Guard thou thine Herakles and give him gifts;
These twain have shown the patience of the gods,
God-like shall be the guerdon." And she ceased.

So they in Heaven: but meanwhile on the earth
Dark night came down upon the Argive folk,
And all the people gathered to the feast;
Then, with the golden wine-cup in his hands,
The Priest arose and said, "O friends, ye know
The deed that these two brothers wrought to-day—
Pledge we them then in the first cup we drain."

The Argive shout went sounding up to heaven
Till the gods heard it on their golden thrones;
But neither clamour, clang, nor clash of arms
Awaked from sleep the weary Cleobis

Slumbering within the temple. At his side
Lay Biton, with the sweat-drops on his curls;
For, while they slept, to them had Herè given
Her greatest blessing. Both the twain were dead.

MY SAINT.

M. L.

Yes! in this life we all do find our saint,
We worship, each within his own heart-shrine,
Some face that, though in vision pale and faint,
Hath caught the reflex of the light divine,
And walketh ever in that light, as one
Knowing Heaven waiting when her work is done.

My Saint! She wears no halo round her head,
And bears no crucifix within her hand,
Walks not in convent alleys cloistered,
But in our common paths. I understand
The lessons that she liveth day by day—
A sweet Evangel in my sight alway.

I look upon her head down bent in prayer,
  And almost think the sunshine on the walls
Casts a faint glory on the golden hair,
  With loving touch upon the clasped hands falls.
Hearing her voice the daily prayer renew,
I, sometimes, half-believe its words are true.

What if they be? The old faith after all
  Had visions lovelier than our loveliest dream.
Who knows? There may be answer when we call.
  Even I, not all so careless as I seem,
If I had faith, would wish it like to thine—
Thy soul is far more near to God than mine.

A WOMAN'S "YES."

"*Veni, vidi,*" but *non* "*vici.*"

I MET her walking in the park,
  Observed the night was wet,
And slipped by slow gradations to
  The night when first we met.

Told her I saw, and straightway then
  Proceeded to adore,
And though six weeks had passed since that
  I only loved the more.

I said, with easy grace, that I
  Had read her through and through,
And by her eyes I fancied she
  Had learnt to love me too.

Then whispered low, (I trusted she
  Like feelings would confess),
"Ah! do you think me foolish, dear?"
  She answered promptly, "Yes."

SUNSET.

ABOVE, the faint woodbine
Holds its sweet breath, listening our words to know;
In brakes, like flame, the scarlet rowans glow,
And thick upon the lush grass lie below,
Petals of eglantine.

This is no quarrel light.
All links that bound us twain are broken through.
As by an open grave stand I and you,
Ere the dead friendship, falsely deemed so true,
Be buried out of sight.

Let it be so:—
O'er dead Love's corse why lavish vain regret?
Time's dial-hand can ne'er be backward set,
But, while our parting-hour it toucheth yet,
Clasp hands before we go.

For, in the night to come,
The great God-angel Death may pass my door,
And I with him may cross Life's threshold o'er,
Unshriven of sin 'gainst Love, for evermore—
Thine own lips may be dumb.

And when thy spirit hath
Known mine more clearly in some fuller day,
What were it when we meet, if meet we may,
To look within immortal eyes, and say,
"We parted in our wrath"?

My life is incomplete
Without thee. See, my pride is broken down,
Round that fair head the slant rays form a crown,
Ere the hot sun on hotter wrath go down,
Forgive me, sweet.

IN THE MORNING.

LOVE, I am here.
Wild words passed yesterday 'twixt me and you,
My careless hands wrought the deep wrong I rue,
You swore I should repent it. Was it true?
Close, come more near.

Shuddering and white?
Why? Let your lips press close and warm to mine.
Ah, sweetheart! has my beauty lost its shine?
Was not this woman pledged *for ever* thine
Who died last night?

So. Turn away.
We did not think to meet again like this.
A lover's quarrel should end in after-bliss;
Last night our lips were hungering for a kiss,
Give it to-day!

KILLED AT ISANDULA.

When last year's purple vine-bunches were hiding
'Neath the cool shadow of their fresh green leaves,
And tiny sparrows twittered, all confiding,
From cosy nests beneath the cottage eaves,
When evening's mellow tints of crimson-golden
Made sunny flecks on chestnut leaves above,
I stood with drooping head, my eyes down holden
Beneath the gaze of my young soldier-love.

I see him even now. His dark eye flashes,
Thinking of glory won beyond the sea;
He kissed the tears from off my drooping lashes,
And said that he would soon come back to me.
Holding my hands in his, he said, "My own,
You are a soldier's love; be brave, my Kate.
Katie, I will not leave you long alone;
Wait for me love, you have not long to wait.

Why was it that a sudden chill shot through me,
  When those warm lips were pressed to my cold brow?
Whence came the wild half-reasoning fear that drew me
  To pray, as I have never prayed till now?
Could I have felt the darkened shadow falling
  Between me and the one I loved so well?
Knew I my sunny days were past recalling,
  Heart-darkness coming? Ah, I cannot tell.

But letters came; they were so long, so bright,
  So brimming over with his love for me,
So tender, yet so joyous, making light
  Of all the fears I cherished ceaselessly.
And he was coming soon; I was so glad
  To know my Frank was coming back again,
And a lieutenant, too. Ah, if he had—
  God's way is best—I did not think so then.

Ah, when I heard of Isandula's fight,
  I felt so hard, so stunned, I *could* not say,
"Thy will be done." I *could* not think it right.
  Sometimes I cannot yet. One day I may,

Yet I know he was worth a hero's crown :
  I can bear it now, for his pain is past,
And he never flinched till they shot him down,
  He was true and firm to the very last.

They buried him where he fell. My love,
  I have striven, as you told me, to be brave,
Though I cannot weep your form above,
  Or wreathe spring flowers on your southern grave,
For I feel, though your heavenly rest be won,
  You would miss my face, 'mid the angel-throng ;
We shall meet again, when my work is done—
  Wait me dear love, you will not wait me long.

EVENTIDE.

Beloved and most beautiful, I see
  With the violet depths of those dear eyes,
A clear soul-flame that burns all silently,
  Like trembling stars it in them folded lies.

When round us is the solemn eventide,
  And that small hand is clasped within my own,
All other thoughts are hushed, and by thy side,
  I feel the love I hardly dare to own.

Fair saint! I lay before thine altar fair,
  A feeling from all earthly touches shriven,
Thy name may mingle in my purest prayer,
  A love I need not blush to own to Heaven.

HOW LONG?

How long, O Death, how long? We tarry here
Waiting the flashing of thy chariot wheels—
They come so slow, these loitering wheels of Death.

He has so much to tell us, ah, so much;
Life would not answer, kept lips sealed and close,
Wilt thou be cruel, too, O friend, O Death?

The "key of all the creeds," men say, thou hast;
Long have we lain at the shut door of Faith.
Are our hands strong to turn that key of thine?

Will it be light, and the dear lips we loved?
Will our eyes stare into an endless dark?
Smiling, good Death? Touch lips, and let us *know*.

Great gifts we do not long for, naught but rest;
I ask not wings; for me it is enough
May I but lose the ache of weary feet.

STUDIES IN STYLE.

I.—CALVERLEY IN COLLEGE.

He read us passages through the long summer,
Such as might touch the heart,
Such as might fascinate a chance new-comer
Into the realm of Art.

Tennyson, Browning, on the dull ears falling,
Unheededly passed by,
There came a day, a memory worth recalling,
When he read Calverley.

Silence at first, then faces leaning forward,
Drawn by the rhythmic flow,
While the snow fell, and the spindrift swept norward,
Upon the roof below.

Then the wind changed. The fierce hail drove in dashes
Upon the pane without :
Within, the light, and, 'neath the reader's lashes,
The laugh that rippled out.

Five minutes only. Then the spell was shattered,
The voice's charm had fled.
The reader ? Still is here. The class ? Is scattered.
The poet ? He—is dead.

II.—THAT NIGHT.

On the dim seashore, where the night-winds roam,
Two burdens fell, and all two lives grew light,
A mist-pall shrouded the dead land in white,
And the sea shivered into lines of foam,
That happy night.

What mattered it if, in embrace that weds
The things that are, the things beyond earth's sight,
The long grey waves that, in the grey twilight,
Crashed on the sand, had closed above our heads,
We lived, that night.

One lightning-flash cleft air from sky to shore,
And showed two faces through great love grown white,
Fear panted on the lips of our delight,
Then—Fear and Shame fell slain for evermore,
That happy night.

III.—THE HOMECOMING OF ARTHUR.

And Guinevere was gone ; and Arthur stood,
With a dull weight of pain upon his heart,
As one who, lying in a deathlike trance,
Hears passionate sobbings, and low voices say—
"Our friend is dead," and cannot speak one word,
Even when the eyes, that were his light of life,
Drop tears upon his face. So stood the King,
There, in the bower where all things spoke of her
Whose beauty had made all things beautiful
To him who loved her with a deeper love
Than his to whom she gave her heart away,
What time she gave her hand unto the King.
The chamber lay in shadow, saving where
A single slant of sun shot sideways in,
And, falling on the floor, showed one bright hair
Upon the silk-wove carpet under foot.
Alas ! the golden head that wore it now
Lay lower in its soilure and its shame.—
And in the window's darkest lattice-nook,

Crouched Dagonet the Fool, with hands tight-clenched
And yearning gaze fixed on his master's face,
Like some dumb thing whose soul is in its eyes,
Longing to comfort, but without the power.
Then Arthur turned, and lo! Sir Gareth there,
Known by the plume that waved before the rest
In day of battle, when the heathen horde
Brake like a wave on Arthur's mail-clad knights,
For, saving Lancelot and the King, were none
Whose lance might cope with his. "Where is the Queen?"
These words broke from the King's parched lips, and he
Who stood without the threshold answer made:
"My Lord, I know not." The uncertain words
His lips had uttered, but his heart denied,
Reddening the half-averted shadowed face.
Like summer-lightning Arthur's wrath flashed out,
And half Excalibar flamed from its sheath.
"Speak, and speak out, man. When, with whom, fled she?"
"Before the east was streaked with rosy fire,
And—with her rode Sir Lancelot of the Lake."
"With Lancelot!" Gareth heard a heavy fall,
The murmured names of "Guinevere" and "Christ."

Then all the casement darkened into black,
Life's light came never back to Arthur more.

IV.—THE END OF THE STORY.

So the old story ends,
  Endeth for ever here.
  Once our two souls came near,
  Each was to other dear,
We were more than lovers—friends.

Ah! all this *once* hath been.
  For while we twain did stand,
  Hand clasped in either hand,
  Was earthquake in Love's land,
And a chasm yawned between.

No rift too deep to cross;
  We had bridged it, had we tried,

But now the gulf is wide,
We shiver on either side,
Neither can pass across.

Were she a man, why then,
No need of a magic wand,
We should clasp each other's hand
And he would understand,
And all would come right again.

Were I a woman, she,
Knowing she did me wrong,
Being as sweet as strong,
Would own her fault ere long ;
Now, it will never be.

No more regretful talk.
We saw Love's face turn gray
With death. He lies to-day,
Crushed down beneath the clay,
But still Love's ghost will walk.

I have paid him each grave-rite,
  For hardening memories sought,
  Have heaped above him ought
  Of bitter word and thought,
But the ghost comes forth at night.

They will haunt me all my days,
  Her turn of head and throat,
  Her tresses as they float,
  Her voice's clear low note,
And all her gracious ways.

No meeting while we live.
  In the dark, where life makes end,
  Where both our footsteps wend,
  I shall seek and find my friend,
And say; at last, "Forgive."

THROUGH THE WOOD.

DAINTY spiræa, meadow-sweet,
Crushed by the print of tiny feet,
You gave your beauty and freshness forth,
She took them as things of little worth,
  Though your life was given with them.

Faded violets upon the path,
The sun your freshness withered hath,
But yet I raise you, for it may be
You were lying on the path when she
  Trailed over you her robe.

Folded rose, like a maiden fair,
Veiling her breast from the chill night air,
Breathe the sweet secret hidden up
In the depth of thine alabaster cup—
  Did she linger by thy side?

Honeysuckles in drooping twine,
With young buds red as the red of wine,

Did one of your sisters, one happier spray,
Rest at her delicate throat to-day?
Was it pressed to curvèd lips?

Tall quivering grasses, marguerites white,
Silvery pale in the pale moonlight,
Fallen petals your secret tell—
Was my darling trying Love's oracle?
Was I in her heart the while?

"BECAUSE."

(*A Sequel to Mrs. Burnett's "Woman's Reason."*)

NOT much at first that drew me near to you—
Only a gleam in eyes of Teuton blue.
Winter it was, when first you touched my hand,
Now the birds sing through all the blossoming land,
Nor is the reason hard to understand—
It is, because I love you.

I almost tremble lest I give too much,
Lest this new love idolatry may touch,
And yet, for this, is Love not less, but more
Tried friends are truer than they were before,
I read with clearer eyes my own heart's lore,
Since the sweet time I loved you.

All common things grow fair within my eyes.
Why is this daily weary work a prize?
Why is Life's meaning now no vain pretence?
Why Faith is more than Doubt, and Soul than Sense?
Why lips that once said, "Fate," breathe "Providence"?
O Love! because I love you.

ONLY A WOMAN'S HAIR.

"ONLY a woman's hair." They read the words,
And then from out the paper's yellow fold
There dropped a heavy tress of lustrous hair,
A braided sleave of chestnut-dusky gold.

Within the secret drawer beside it lay
  A withered rosebud. Reverently they lift
The shining tress. "Whose was it?" do you ask?
  The loved was Stella, and the lover Swift.

A worldling, though his words of fire went forth
  With bitter sneer against all empty glare,
Half atheist, yet he had a tender spot,
  A touch of pathos. "Only a woman's hair!"

I wonder if, amid Vanessa's wiles,
  He lost the memory of that olden time
When Stella's sweet face dimpled into smiles,
  Beneath the spell of Shakespeare's magic rhyme.

If, when all England voiced her praise for him,
  He, heartsick, turned from its applause away,
Knowing that she, who had rejoiced with him,
  Had closed her gentle eyes before that day.

There is a longing yearning in those words,
Veiling deep tenderness beneath a show
Of careless cynicism, heartless scorn:
"Only a woman's hair!" Think you not so?

HEAVEN AND EARTH.

"'Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediment.' But is it not from the perfect union of intellectual sympathy in such that the most bitter human pain can come?"

SHE.

SINCE here I dwelt the years are seven,
Thou on earth, and I in heaven.

The saints are happy. I only know
The love of a life lies far below.

For gates of pearl and city of gold,
Give me the home of days of old

Through song and harpings I strain my ear,
For my children's prayer I cannot hear.

Still thou art first. If I sin in this,
The pitying Christ will forgive, I wis.

One face is sad 'mid the angel mirth;
I in heaven, and thou on earth.

Still works in my heart the old love-leaven,
Thou on earth, and I in heaven.

HE.

Ah! Heaven is full: but here is dearth.
Thou in heaven, and I on earth.

Is it well with you? Do you never miss
Homejoy, and sorrow, and daily kiss?

Forgive me. Doubt will have its birth;
Thou in heaven, and I on earth.

Man's trust cannot cling as a woman's cleaves,
Through faith in some woman a man believes.

What matters the three years' path we trod,
If death can sunder the joined of God?

Over those years did ever brood
The beauty of your womanhood.

The touch of your lips made day of night;
Sweet saint, had I known you half aright,

I had seen a glory round your hair—
God's angel with me unaware.

I was blind and deaf till my angel fled;
What hope or help lies with the dead?

Though I cried to you in my bitterest need,
Though I wept my heart out, you would not heed.

What life, that goes unloved, would take
Friendship or love, that Death can break?

What were it to find, past Death's abyss,
A great gulf set 'twixt that life and this?

Better to hunger, long, and crave,
Than take God's best this side the grave.

Make that life climax all in this,
Leave heaven to teach the highest bliss.

But love and longing are little worth;
Thou in heaven, and I on earth.

CLASPED HANDS.

In the hurry of life they pass us by,
And the hands we have touched but a moment before
Drop lightly from ours, and so it ends,
And we acquiesce without knowing why;
But the spirit clasps hands for the Evermore
With those who in deed and in truth are friends.

And how to choose them? I do not know;
For mine were revealed by a simple word
That showed the depths of their souls to me.
You wish to know it? Nay, let it go.
It was only spoken for those who heard,
But is garnered up in the hearts of three.

Two lives together, and one apart;
Apart or together, Love is the same.
But a glance sometimes in the crowded street,
Or a touch of the hand in the busy mart,
With the accent I love on my old pet name,
Shows the deep, firm union when we meet.

Not a friendship of likeness; for each has her own
Of diverse talents, of different powers—
To me but this idle gift of rhyme,
To another all magic of colour and tone,
To her, rich in all things, for her dower
The lore of the beautiful old Greek time.

And the tiny seed that was sown that day,
  The word flung forth on the summer air,
    Has lengthened its growth in the long years' length.
Through the golden sunshine, the chill mist-grey,
  With never a weed, and never a tare,
    Hath Love's beautiful harvest gathered strength,

For the garnering reaping-time to come
  In the far-off Then. Your lips are dumb,
    You doubt if indeed there be a Then?
Friend, what were love, did we not know
  In the darkness whither our souls shall go,
    Our hands shall meet, and be clasped again?

CARLYLE.

A GREAT man is gone from us. No new name,
  But one whose words had touched us long ago.
Like a volcano-fire their sudden flame,
Deep, strong, and earnest, lasting as his fame,
  That grey old man, whom England honoured so.

For deep into our time his voice had passed,
  Still ringing like a trumpet-call alway,
To all of noble in us. He was classed
Among philosophers, but, to the last,
  Half-poet was this teacher of our day.

The world is darker since those eyes were dim.
  We saw our hero in that earnest man,
Who spake plain truth, not clothed in courteous trim.
Like his own Friedrich we have chosen him,
  Because "no liar and no charlatan."

IN THE DISSECTING-ROOM.

Supposed to be a sceptical student looking at a beautiful, dead girl.

YES! there it lies in its death-stillness, there.
All woman-feeling, woman-shame, is gone
From those pale cheeks, whose dead-white roses blushed

Erewhile in crimson bloom, beneath the gaze
Of him who loved her, if his eyes but looked
Into her own. Ay! that was once, but now
When fifty eyes were gazing on her form,
And brutal jests were heard, and looks were cast
Upon her, never stir, nor flush of shame,
Disturbed the marble pallor of the limbs.
Untouched as yet! And *I* must ruin this,
Whose awful helplessness might touch us still,
Had we one spark of manly feeling left,
Reverence for God or woman. No, not one
Of those who seek the secret of disease
Will think of aught like this in the dead clay
That lies unquivering 'neath the scalpel's edge,
Or, at the most, will say one careless word,
"She has been beautiful." For beauty still
Lingers upon each curve, a deep, sweet peace
Is round the hushed lips, whose faint smile half seems
As she had seen the angels in the dream
In which she passed from earth. Ah! not to me
Shall any spirit whisper of the dark
That orbs the circle of our life. At first

My soul was pure, but now,—Stained black as sin
And steeped in all pollution to the lips,
How dare I talk of purity? Yet once
I strove to raise me from this slough of sin,
And cried in fruitless prayer to the deaf God,
Who is not, or who neither hears nor heeds.
Well, that is passed with me. The night is come—
Alone with mine own soul, and with the dead,
Whose ghostly whiteness glimmers through the gloom
That shrouds us both. But she is more than I.
She knoweth the great secret, she has solved
The mystery of Death. Ah, whisper it
To one who fain would be as thou art now.
There is no answer from the dead-pale lips.
No answer—never—none for Evermore.

ONLY A BABY'S GRAVE.

ONLY a baby's cot!
  With the broidered robe she wore
Upon the pillow white,
  Unpressed for evermore.

Only a baby's curl!
  A silken tiny thread
Of brightly curling hair
  From a little golden head.

Only a baby's face!
  A smile on its dimpled lips,
A half-blown rosebud held
  In the rosy finger-tips.

Only a baby's grave!
  A shady, quiet spot,
Where I come to pray and weep
  O'er my darling unforgot.

A WOMAN'S FAILURE.

"*When I am weak, then am I strong.*"

So all is ended. I come back
From wandering down the beaten track
Of the world, to tread the old home-ways.
I meant a life that men should praise,
God meant—your lover, dear.

I was to share in all pleasures rife,
Write my poems and live my life.
When the spell of my words held all souls fast,
Come home to heaven and you, at last;
But love comes first, it seems.

You would have waited? Yes, I know,
You have the strength to wait, and so
My weakness better claims your care.
Ah, love, it is not hard to bear,
My woman-failure *here*.

"ENGAGED."

"Non, non, je ne veux point d'un esprit qui soit haut,
Et femme qui compose en sait plus qu'il ne faut,
Et c'est assez pour elle, à vous en bien parler,
De savoir prier Dieu, m'aimer, coudre, et filer."

YOU nestle fluttering, to my side,
I feel your heartbeats, dear,
God's mystery of womanhood
Comes very close and near.

Lovers, the old French poet said,
Are "two, with but one heart";
Yet, our two souls must ever be,
In all save love, apart.

Unless some man's love touches you,
Your lives are incomplete;
In much that moves us, you can be
Not even companions, Sweet.

Our pains, our sins, you cannot know,
  Not even his you wed;
Dark places lie in each man's life,
  Your feet can never tread.

You are a poet. And you think
  I love you more for this?
Those lovely lips are fair enough
  Without the Muses' kiss.

Nay. Be a poem in yourself,
  That still shall sing to me,
The beauty of a woman's love,
  A woman's purity.

CATULLIAN HENDECASYLLABICS.

LONG ago, the Roman poet Catullus,
Seeking to give some gift to future ages,
More than his rhymes of very doubtful moral,

Left, for a torture to us modern rhymsters,
This most difficult form of all verse-cadence.
English Sapphics Macaulay calls a failure,
Swinburne-anapæsts drive a man half crazy ;
Why should we, who are neither Greek nor Latin,
Fetter ourselves within these ancient metres?
They are but fit for light love-tales and stories,
Fit for praising the blossom of a girl's mouth,
Or the creaming froth of the rich Falernian ;
Fit for songs in temple of Aphrodité,
Not the glorious battle-crash of the Iliad.

THREE TEACHERS.

LIFE's teaching never gave me aught but pain.
A rule so harsh, so stern, I could not brook,
And child-eyes learnt from out his school to look
Into that dark, whereof no terror shook
Sick heart and weary brain.

Another teacher taught me then to take
  Pleasure in all things done beneath his sight,
  As timed to music-cadence, day and night
  Went past me. And Life's heaviest tasks were light,
When done for Love's dear sake.

When six swift years had sped all silently,
  Love rose and said, "Unutterably sweet
  This teaching was. When lessoning is complete,
  Destiny brooks no tarrying of Love's feet
  In pleasant places: Not again we meet."
Say, was it strange that I,

Who once had known the sweetness of Love's hest,
  Clasped him, and cried, "I will not let thee go"?
  Love loosed my clinging hands, "Not now, not so,"
  And vanished. Straightway through the silence, lo!
Came Death: and taught the rest.

EST-CE-QUE-C'EST?

"Are souls straight so happy, that dizzy with heaven,
They drop earth's affections?"

Do you suppose it? I would lean from heaven,
To watch the old home-life go on the same,
Knowing my sins, my errors all forgiven,
And naught left of my presence but a name.

Amid their tresses other saints might wear
The amaranthine blossoms of heaven's plain;
The stars would drop unheeded from my hair,
For childhood's daisy-coronals again.

Answer me not. Ah! what was heaven a-ringing,
With many harpings, angel-tones of praise,
Though listening seraphs bowed to hear my singing,
If shadows rested on my friend's dear face?

I doubt not heaven: but, though trusting still
That Aiden far, thy face, O love, is near;
The Future may be even what it will,
I hold the present very fair and dear.

THE LIFE OF A ROSE.

THE rose flings out her scent to the air,
  And bares her breast to the south wind's sigh,
And he nestles within it, hidden there
  Till her loveliness passes all silently,
    And the crimson petals of the rose,
    Are trod underfoot at the eve's warm close.

Yet, the fallen blossom is happier far
  Than the buds which in shadow wither alone,
But seen by the maiden evening star,
  Of the chrism of love untouched, unknown,
    More sweet to blossom all gorgeously,
    In her passionate beauty, *then*—to die.

And the wind passed by, to another flower ;
  But a faint, sweet odour lingered still
Of her, in whose heart he had lain an hour,
  Who had given her all with lavish will,
    With him. You think it dearly bought?
    That memory was more than all she sought.

ON LEAVING COLLEGE.

My fellow-student, studying-time is done,
And shall we part without a word's farewell
But light "Goodbye," spoke between scarlet lips,
Even as we stoop to take new burdens up,
Leaving old friends and friendships far behind?

Belovèd, if, in the far years to come,
Our paths shall lie apart, one out of sight,
Yonder, God holds both lives within His hand,
Nor holds the living closelier than the dead.
Eternity clasps in all broken lives.

BEGINNING WORK.

8th Jan., 1884.

Hands that I love have touched my key before,
Feet that I love passed through this fast-shut door.

Two went before: and both have passed away.
Their work is done: and mine begins to-day.

Now the fair head the Eastern sunbeams crown,
On the dark hair the Western rays pour down.

Here, where they lived and worked, with longing vain,
My heart cries out for them in bitter pain.

While all about me, in the sunlit air,
Linger the echoes of a once-heard prayer.

Teacher, I thank you, while my eyes are wet,
For lessons learnt I shall not soon forget.

Your careless pupil keeps a love most true;
A very tender memory of you.

Dear friend! no word of sorrow would I say,
Though it could bring you to my side to-day.

Nor by a wish would strive to keep you here—
Love casts out selfishness as well as fear.

No need to think that I am desolate;
We both can trust, and I can work and wait.

Enough if, at the last, you say, with tears,
"You have grown worthier in the waiting years."

WINTER ACONITES.

NOVEMBER was dreary, and gray, and cold,
When I planted my winter aconites.
All through the weary December nights
Not a sign of a leaf-bud broke the mould.
My hopes for the blossoms died away
As I looked. But the snow was gone next day,
And the brown earth starred with gold.

My life was dreary, and bare, and blank,
When I turned from praises half-begun
To list to a word of blame from one
Who had never joined my wooers' rank.
I thought him careless. Now, I know,
Without a leaf, love's blossom may blow.
We two have my flowers to thank.

MARIANA AND ANGELO.

THE evening sunbeams, in their crimson glow,
  Fell through the storied Gothic windows bright,
In flickering rays, that ever to and fro
  Flecked, now with shadow deep, and now with light,
The rapt and handlocked pair who sat below.
  That lady who once mourned in loneliness
Her heart's one love, her faithless Angelo,
  Weeping both morn and eve in sore distress,
  Sat with him hand-in-hand in saintlike loveliness.

And he, her partner, was he worthy her,
  Who wept within the "lonely moated grange,"
Where naught but twittering swallows seemed to stir
  'Neath grey-brown lichened eaves? Would he exchange
Her beauty for another's, and would range
  To other faces, for a time more fair,
Resting his head upon a bosom strange?
  Or does the gleam of Isabel's bright hair
  Seem fairer than the silvered chestnut tresses there?

He, turning from the gorgeous, glowing west,
  Rich with the rosy flame of dying day,
And half his stately head averting, lest
  The long-pent tears should find at last their way—
"My bride, my wife, in words I cannot say
  The love and sorrow blent, my heart that fill,
Unworthy of thy love exceeding. Nay,
  After long years of weary waiting, still
  Thy tears, Sweet, fell for me, let mine too have their will."

She laid her hand on his, a gentle touch,
  Slight, but it thrilled his inmost spirit there.
"Enough, my Angelo; too long, too much,
  Thou hast reproached thyself, and if there were
Cause for it, did I not forgive thee, where
  I waited, praying for thee morn and eve,
Far from the world's rough crowd and empty glare?
  Thine image left me not, nor will it leave,
  Love, *now* you love me best. What need have I to grieve?

"Life is too short for us to mourn and grieve
  O'er that which might have been, and was not, done.

That light has come to me which comes at eve,
  Though not so bright, with chastened radiance won
From tears at morning shed. Beloved one,
  Let us wend forth, the sun is well-nigh set,
And lo! from the beech-woods above us, come,
  Adown the pleached walk with roses set,
  Claudio, with fair and faithful Juliet."

A FRIDAY THOUGHT.

SLOWLY the hours of the long week slip past,
And join the months that lie between us two.
Is your work weary too, O oldtime friend?
Do hands lie idle at your world's far end?
Ah! when the slow years blossom to, "At Last!"
What will the meeting be between us two!

THE DEAD CHRIST.

ROUND him they wrapped their robes of richest hue,
They dropped their costliest spices on the red,

Cruel marks upon the forehead, where the blue
And livid hue of death was overspread.
No thought of saving there : they only knew
The Christ was dead.

Our gifts upon their altar still we lay,
But with the form the faith is all unwed.
We seek the oldtime sepulchre to pray,
The mourners linger yet, but He is fled.
Beside an empty grave we kneel to-day.
And Christ? Is dead.

TWILIGHT.

"Jesus said unto her, Said I not unto thee that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

NAY, Lord! It is not much
Of Thy fair glory that I ask to see.
Thou canst not see that higher faith in me,
Of those that centre heart and soul in Thee.
Mine is not such.

But, even as a lord within his palace
Hears wails of hunger through the dancers' shout,
And sends waste crumbs to them that stand without,
So give one drop to cool my spirit-drought,
From the cool waters of thy brimming chalice.

I ask not to be one of those whose seat
Is with Thee at Thy banquet. Nay, my Lord.
I would be her who, by the rest abhorred,
Made balm for Thee of her most precious hoard,
Whose loosened tresses touched those blessed feet.

Lord Christ, Thy love is sweet.
I know it not. I am unworthy, I,
That Thou shouldst even listen to my cry.
Doubter and sceptic? Yes, but let me lie
Clasping Thy feet.

DAWN.

"*That we should seek after Him, if, haply, we might find him, though he be not far from any one of us.*'

My Lord, I do repent me that I strove
Against Thy will, and, with impatient hands,
Snatched at the guidance of a life which Thou
Wert reining from the outer darkness' verge.
O Lord, I do repent.

Because I knew thine answering readier far,
Than ever was my asking, would not seek,
Then wailed for gifts ungiven me, like a child,
Misdoubting the deep love that longed for me,
O Lord, I do repent.

Because I chose me idols of my own,
And poured my richest wine, and left for Thee
But dregs and lees I thought unworthy them,
Thou hast accepted them ; yet, most for this,
O Lord, I do repent.

Because I walked me in mine own wild way,
And blamed Thee for the thorns I found therein,
And cursed Thee from my side, then cried aloud,
"Behold this life I fashioned for myself,"
O Lord, I do repent.

I would not own my brother's keepership,
I tempted other souls from out Thy path,
Yea, even the twain whose love I held most dear,
Nearer than God, nearer than mine own soul.
O Lord, I do repent.

Because I took this loveliest gift of Thine,
The greatest given to any human soul,
And used it for myself, and would not wait
Till thou shouldst wed Thy music with my words,
O Lord, I do repent.

Because I would not toil within Thy fields
When they were white to harvest, but stood by
Till evening shadows dusked their changeful gold,
For this, my bringing of half-ripened sheaves,
O Lord, I do repent.

LINES.

"*My life is full of weary days.*"—TENNYSON.

SAYEST thou so, O Poet? thou for whom
  England has echoed her deep praise so long,
Thou who hast caught the vintage and the bloom
  Of old Provençal blent with Grecian song,

Who wearest with a sweeter, calmer grace,
  The poet-mantle Keats hath laid adown.
Can life cast shadows dark across the face,
  On whose calm brows there rests our Wordsworth's crown

More than these earlier notes whose chords are pain,
  We hold deep truths of "In Memoriam" best.
Better against life-weariness to strain,
  True life-work nobly done *must* bring its rest.

HER TWO LOVERS.

ABOVE, her lattice sways tremulously ;
Beneath, stand two lovers, the rose and I.

The rose, the passionate child of the South,
Parches with longing for one red mouth.

"Let me climb to her chamber, unseen of men,
And let her who has crowned me kill me then."

He speaks and leaves me. I stand alone—
No foothold for me on the hard grey stone.

But the patient rose climbs higher and higher,
With tendrils that clasp like a man's desire.

He reaches her window. With failing breath,
"O Love, I love you," is all he saith.

On a lovely forehead came a frown,
And a white hand struck the bold blossom down.

In its torture uttered the rose no wail,
But the fluttering swallows told the tale—

"Crushed petals fell on her floor below,
One dropt, by chance, on her bosom's snow.

"It lay there still, when the daylight went,
And the dying rose sighed 'So best. Content.'"

I turn from her casement silently:
"So near, dead lover? As near am I.

"For a verse of mine has reached the heart,
In which I, the poet, can hold no part,

"Has whispered a thought of an unknown bliss,
Which both of our lives by an handbreadth miss."

. . . . .

Which will be nearer her at life's close,
I, the poet, or he, the rose?

HE AND SHE.

"'Tis sweet when you have won indeed
The heart to which your own beats true."
"'Tis sweet to love the lips that plead
That they have given their love to you."

"Sweeter to say, 'O Love, these hands
Hold Life's cup out, to leave or take.'"
So he. A woman understands
Sweetest to die, for Love's sweet sake.

PARADISE REGAINED.

Ah, Love! a year ago to-day,
A figure black 'neath skies of grey
I stood, and thought to stand alway,
With drooping heart and downcast eyes,
Outside the gate of paradise.

How could I deem such sombre skies
Could flush like rose-hearts? Now, more wise,
Beneath the gaze of dark-blue eyes,
My woman-heart will shyly say,
"Thy paradise is here to-day."

VALENTINE'S DAY.

1884-1885.

THE soft spring-wind blows on my brow,
I sit and muse all silently,
Wondering if, in thine autumn now,
Australian winds bring thoughts of me,
O Valentine beyond the sea!

If heedlessly I gave you pain,
Forgive. Your life from mine is free,
Yet take, from out an idle brain,
A woman's careless thought of thee,
O Valentine across the sea!

IN THE DAY OF THE EAST WIND.

THE rocks at my feet are strewn with the crimson and brown seaweed
Brought by the tidal swell, as waves after waves succeed,
And break with a plash in my path, but I do not heed;
And over the Links comes the east wind drearily moaning.

I stand on the edge of the rock-pool, and gaze into it, and why?
The place has a strange fascination for me, but not one of those am I
Who would seek a self-sought grave in its depths, despairingly;
And over the Links comes the east wind drearily moaning.

I have put the temptation from me, but it comes back again and again,
That I should quiet, in this way, the aching of heart and of brain,
And the sea always whispers, "Come," with its eerie, surging refrain;
And over the Links comes the east wind drearily moaning.

Homeward I go through the shingle and sand, while the spray of the sea
Fills my hair with the salt ooze and foam, and the billows break ceaselessly
Rolling in with resistless force, like some dark-coming Destiny;
And over the Links comes the east wind drearily moaning.

ALEXIA.

(*An old pupil: died, Nov. 21, 1885*).

LYING cold, and still, and sweet,
Christmas roses at your feet,
Dear, what love-word shall I say,
Here, between the night and day?

Since the day I bade goodbye,
In the three months' space passed by,
Seeming only as an hour,
One has worn the orange-flower.

Only three months' since, and now
Death's faint poppies crown your brow,
And to-night I lie awake,
Sorrowing for your dead sake.

I, with heart that was at rest,
When you sobbed upon my breast,
Touched by grief I could not know,
Kissed you once, and let you go.

Gone ; where comfort cannot reach,
Gone ; past touch of tender speech,
Where we shall not meet again—
I am glad I kissed you then.

Patient student, it was hard,
Patient work met no reward,
Here your object did you miss ?
Will you fail in heaven like this ?

AT THE BRINK.

THE powers Life gave me were too narrowed down,
  Its longings far too large,
Come I to end them, o'er the sea-sand brown,
  Down to the dark sea-marge.

The tide, which raises foamlips deathly sweet,
  To the white kisses of the false cold moon,
Casts lifeless weeds in mockery at my feet—
  So shall I be right soon.

When faint hands loose their quivering hold on life,
  Nor close their clasp on aught of earth again,
Shall yearning questioning and spirit-strife
  Die, in the dying brain.

The hands I stretched to the cruel heaven above
  Are empty still. Fill them, I ask of thee;
My longing, and my spirit's cry for Love,
  Answer, O Sea.

A SHUT HEART.

I KEPT a shut heart all the wintry years,
And evermore
The passions pled for entrance at its door,
But were denied.

And in the shadows of the darkened court,
Beneath the portico,
Sat traitorous Liking, smiling soft and slow,
A foe within my gate.

One came to me, with eyes like winter stars,
Fair, tall, and proud.
But my soul's voice, through all his knocking loud,
I could not hear.

"Open. No woman-soul is shut to me,"
Loudly he cried,
"Men call me Passion." When no voice replied,
He went his way.

In the grey gloaming of a summer eve,
I heard a voice
Which, in the earlier days, had been my choice
To listen to,

Saying, "Hast thou forgotten? We were friends
In those dead days.
I have remembered—and through thorny ways,
Have wandered here.

Though many maidens' hearts stand open wide,
Where rest were sweet,
I passed them all, and come, with weary feet,
To one shut door.

"Here will I stand, and pray for entrance, Sweet.
Your pride may break,
For, in the name of the old Friendship's sake,
I come to-day."

Then I unbarred with speed the inner door,
Came to the gate

While my hands trembled on the fastenings, "Wait,"
He spoke again.

"Stay. Entering thus, I should but lie to you.
For well I know
You call and think me Friendship. Nay, not so.
My name is Love."

I shrank. But traitorous Liking mastered me.
Both bolt and bar
Fell. Then the hinges moved with sullen jar,
And Love came in.

My heart is shut again. But sometimes back
The portal rolls,
And a song issues forth to tell men's souls
Love dwells with me.

"UNDER DEEP APPLE BOUGHS."

THE garden-shadows are flecked with the glory of light.
In the light, the tulips flame; in the dark, fern fronds uncurl;
And each red apple-bloom bursts its beauty into white,
As if a ruby should break, and shatter into a pearl.

They flutter slowly downward, and fall, soft as a snow-shower,
Here at our feet their life and loveliness find an end.
Was it worth to make such beauty only for one hour?
Do you grieve for the fate of the blossoms, O my friend?

When Autumn stands in the land, with full and bounteous bosom,
Honey-sweet fruit shall hang, ripening and red on the wall,
Shall girlhood's gift of versing be but a barren blossom
Wait, heart. Thy fruit shall set, when the flowers of fancy fall.

A DEAD EGYPTIAN.

"The reason of the objection of the Egyptians to the common mode of interment was their belief that the soul retained memory and consciousness, and gradually decayed along with the body."

DEAD! Buried out of sight,
Hidden away out of the happy world,
Where on the beach the billows break foam-curled,
Following the gibbous moon.

I, an Egyptian prince,
Whose fathers ruled the land Nile's waters lave,
Am trampled down into a Grecian grave,
For love of a Greek girl.

Dimly that fatal night
Comes back in shuddering horror. Wherefore moan?
I know she *once* has loved me. I have known
Her heartbeats leap on mine.

The chalcedony brooch
Fell from her robe, shattered between us there,
And the slipped stola showed her shoulder bare,
And rounded bosom-curves.

No word had passed between,
Save "Love, I love you,"—only *one* long kiss,
The first, the last. We turned, saw, watching this,
Her brother's eyes on us.

A curse leapt to his lips,
A wild suspicion leapt to heart and brain.
"Die. The Heracleid blood shall bear no stain!"
He shrieked, and rushed on me.

Through a blood-mist, I see
Set teeth, locked limbs, fierce wrestle of host and guest,
A dagger plunged through breast-bone and through breast,
A corpse upon the floor.

What next? I cannot say.
Voices, hushed sobbings, change of dark and light,

Then, all things blackened to the endless night
That presses on my eyes.

Upon my life-in-death
Stole the rich heaviness of some perfume,
Through the dank, earthy closeness of the tomb,
Her jasmine reached my brain.

At first she often came,
As tender women will, to weep and pray.
Now, though I wait and listen night and day,
Her step has ceased to come.

While here I lie alone,
Over my head the wild northeasters rave,
Strange, hideous fancies vex me in my grave—
What of the sunlit world?

There, lovers kiss and cling;
Here, in my rotting shroud I fester slow,
All loathly things remember me below,
And she—forgets above.

MY BOOKCASE.

How many volumes do I miss!
  I wish, among folks' duties,
That they would rank returning books.
  But those morocco beauties
Are never touched except by me,
  And really, though I know it's
A shame, I do rejoice to think
  That no one borrows poets.

To those lost books my fancy clings,
  O'er them my memory grovels,
I swear in spirit when I see
  The gaps among the novels.
The Thackeray I "loved and lost,"
  I mourn with sorrow tender,
Whoever has it also has
  The curses of the lender.

The second shelf I frankly own
  A motley, queer collection,
Half-filled with grave philosophers,
  In spite of Kant's defection.
But Calverley and Kingsley sit
  Tucked in among the Germans,
And "Ouida" snugly nestles next
  My only book of sermons.

Spencer keeps cheerful company
  With "How I caught a Tartar,"
Near them the book I treasure most,
  My well-belovèd "Sartor."
Montgomery by Macaulay stands,
  The scorned beside the scorner,
And dear Mark Twain with Rabelais
  Is chatting in the corner.

Homer! This same old copy shone,
  Star of my childish vision,
To read it for myself was once
  The height of my ambition.

Full fifteen years ago, I made
  That blot upon the binding,
Trying to print my name in Greek,
  And difficulty finding.

Dear books! you answer questioning
  Without a why or wherefore.
Our friendship never had a jar;
  You seem to know and care for
The tender touches that I give
  To every well-worn cover,
And, as I love you, friends of mine,
  I could not love a lover.

AT THE NETS.

(Mark I. 20, and Matthew IV. 19-21. Did any third brother decline the brother's call to follow?)

NAY, for one moment stay thy hurrying feet,
Ere falls the blow I can but wait, and meet,

Ere my hands grope, and touch an empty place.
The sun is set on work still incomplete,
The mist hides earth—and heaven, except thy face.

"Called by the Master." True. Thy lot is fair:
But mine? My work is here. How can I dare
Leave God's sea-harvest on the shore to spoil?
Think you no hands would fain grow white in prayer,
That now grow hard and brown through daily toil?

Is it so easy? Ask that Lord of thine
Whether in carpentering-work the line
Fell always true, the harsh plane went not slow.
Not wholly wrong, if, counting cost, you find
Christ-following easier than net-mending, go.

Yet, not in anger. Rather pray thy wise
Compassionate Lord to pour like light on eyes
That now through tears, as ignorance, are dim.
Let the Christ call. Forthwith will I arise,
Straightway will leave my nets, and follow Him.

FINISHED.

"*When the house is finished, Death comes in.*"

CLASPED in your lover's arms, you feel shy gladness,
Too deep to own.
With a dead fire, and finished book, in sadness
I sit alone.

You hear the same old story that the ages
Tell to each one,
My heart has passed into my written pages,
My work is done.

And I recall the Eastern proverb solemn;
"The house," it saith,
"Of Life, when finished to its latest column,
Death entereth."

To visions of the dreamer and the poet
This makes fit end,

For me the parable ; most true I know it.
For you, O friend,

A fairer guest the house in its completeness,
Abides within,
For, when a woman's life is crowned with sweetness,
Love enters in.

TRANSLATIONS.

THE PURGATORY OF DON JUAN.

"*It was a crime of sense, avenged by sense.*"

A CAVALIER with plume and sash,
Flowing lovelocks, black moustache,
And spurs of gold,
Wearing rapier, cloak, and lace,
All of the times of Louis Treize,
But young, not old.

. . . . . .

On the wind is the sound of a ghost-guitar,
And a voice that sings, with faltering jar,
A passionate Spanish strain.
Never a rose is dropped, I ween,
Never a beautiful face is seen
At the broken window-pane.

While he stands in the dark alone,
Round about him gibber and moan
Ghosts of a long-dead sin.
Now there is neither welcome nor light
On the threshold once crossed at dead of night,
While Julia waited within.

"Once thy wooing was heard by all,
And, petal by petal, each maid let fall
At thy feet her beauty's flower.
For thee no casement opens now,
The chill of death is on thy brow,
And this is the midnight hour.

"Over thy head loud shrieks the owl,
In the dark of the wood the lean wolves howl,
The air has a scent of blood.
The vampire flits past with hideous cries,
Wait not thou here till the wan moon rise,
Return, and cross the flood.

"Say, who art thou that tarriest here
Like a spectral ghost at this hour of Fear
From the eerie churchyard clan?"
He answered not. But an answer came,
From Death's blue lips, that hissed his name—
"Hell calls him Don Juan."

—*(Adapted from Theophile Gautier.)*

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

("*Im Walde wandl' ich, und weine.*")

I WALK and weep in greenwood,
The throstle sings so gay,
On the branches high above me,
"Why art so sad to-day?"

"Thy darting swallow-sisters
Can tell the tale to thee,
For in cosy nests they nestle,
Where my darling's windows be."

—*(Heine.)*

PARTED.

("Ich grolle nicht, und wenn das Herz auch bricht.")

DARLING, I am not wroth;
Not though thy love is lost for evermore,
Not though my heart is ashes at its core,
Darling, I am not wroth.

I see thy diamonds' gleam
Paling before the splendour of thine eyes
In their dark brightness. Never shall arise
On thy heart's night one beam.

There, in thy loneliness,
Remorse's serpent hisseth to thy brain,
Of dear dead days that come no more again,
Of *two* souls' wretchedness.

—*(Heine.)*

EVENING.

SINK, gold-beaming Phœbus, sink, for the fields are thirsting
After the still-falling dew; mankind is fainting and failing:
Slower travel the horses,
Down sinks the golden car.

See who out of the depths of the crystalline ocean
Smileth and beckoneth to thee. Doth thy heart answer?
Quicker rush on the horses,
Tethys, the goddess beckons.

Quick, from the car as it thunders down the rose-red of the evening,
Down springs the Sun-god, and Cupid seizeth the golden bridle,
Still are the horses standing,
Drinking with eager up-draughts.

Up through the heaven of silence, with unheard, quiet footfalling,
Cometh the star-dark Night. Her robe holding, followeth after,
Love. Rest and love, ye earthborn,
Phœbus himself is resting.

—*(Schiller.)*

DREAM OF THE PINE.

"*Ein Fichten-baum steht einsam.*"

A PINE-TREE standeth lonely
On a far Norland height,
It slumbereth, while around it
The snow falls thick and white.

And of a palm it dreameth
That, in a southern land,
Lonely and silent standeth
Amid the scorching sand.

—(*Heine.*)

TARRYING.

"*Und als ich so lange, so lange gesäumt.*"

AH, while I tarried, so long, so long,
In foreign lands, with my dream of song,
My love thought her lover too long away,
And the time drew on for our bridal day.

But my love's white arms were enclasping then
Her bridegroom, most foolish of foolish young men.

Ah, love! all perfect from foot to brow,
Thine image is floating before me now.
It was like to a garden, the soul within,
That glows and blossoms, year-out year-in.
That I could part from a love like this,
Was the maddest of all my mad strokes, I wis.

—*(Heine.)*

WORN OUT.

"*Habe auch in jungen Jahren.*"

In the years that I have wasted,
Many sorrows have I tasted
From the love that wrought me woe.
But the wood is far too dear,
And the fire is quenched I fear,
Ma foi! and that is so.

Ah! think of that, my darling.
Let us cease this weary quarrelling,
That has worked us bitter harms.
New life will bloom to-morrow,
So forget the old love-sorrow,
Ma foi! within my arms.

—*(Heine.)*

S'IL L'AVAIT SU.

If he had known the blush that came unbidden,
If he had seen my tears in secret flow,
If the weak heart, that bounded at his footstep,
Had only had the power to tell him so,
If I had given the least excuse to love me,
I should be nestling now upon his breast,
Earth would have been so changed, and life so different,
If he had guessed.

If he had known how all my heart went with him,
  How night and day my thoughts were his alone,
He would have thought me fairer, held me truer,
  And love, such love as he inspired, have known.
My down-dropt eyes, beneath their veiling lashes,
  Hid all the story they had fain confessed.
Ah! such a secret would have won his soul,
    If he had guessed.

If I had known that friendship grows to passion,
  If I had known the spell of dark-blue eyes,
I would have broken every tie between us,
  And lived my life 'neath strange and distant skies.
Now, he may know, when the poor heart that loved him
  Is daily nearing the eternal rest.
Ah, will he say, eyes dimmed above my verses,
    "If I had guessed!"?

—*(Madame Desbordes-Vallière.)*

A BLOSSOM.

"*In Vater's garten heimlich steht.*"

In my father's secret garden grows
A blossom sad and pale,
The winter passes, the March wind blows,
And the blossom shrinks in the gale,
Looking up, weary-eyed,
Like a sick bride.

To me the shrinking blossom speaks,
"Belovèd, pluck thou me!"
White as the white flower are my cheeks—
"Never will I pluck thee,
I seek, till I be dead,
A blossom purple-red."

The floweret spake, "Seek through the world!
Seek—till thou find thy grave.

Vainly thou seek'st, shalt never find
The blossom thou dost crave.
But do thou pluck me now,
I am as sick as thou."

So lisped the flower, and pled so sore,
I plucked it, half in fear,
And straightway bled my heart no more,
Mine inner eye grew clear,
And in my wounded breast
Came heaven's peace and rest.

—(*Heine.*)

A BALLAD OF BYEGONE BEAUTIES.

Ah! in no land the sweet sun sees
Is Roman Flora, once so fair,
Archipiada nor Thaïs,
Who held men's souls bound with their hair.

A mournful echo whispers, "Where?"
  But even their death-place no man knows.
Could not cruel Time such beauty spare?—
  Where are the last year's snows?

With lowered voice, and eyes that weep,
  For Heloïse may ask the bard,
Whose name men's memories aye shall keep
  With her monk-lover Abelard.
And she, whose hair with gems was starred,
  The queen who caused Buridan's woes,
Who sorrowed long 'neath watch and ward—
  Where are the last year's snows?

The queen all-perfect, all-complete,
  Whose loveliness was half disdain,
Bertha and Beatrice, Alice sweet,
  The maid who ruled Anjou and Maine,
Joan of Arc, from far Lorraine,
  Who warred against fair France's foes;
Ah, could such beauty ever wane?—
  Where are the last year's snows?

L'ENVOI.

Ah, prince, you ask with careless pain,
"Where is last autumn's rose?"
And this refrain shall haunt your brain—
"Where are the last year's snows?"

—(*Villon.*)

DON RAMIRO.

"DONNA CLARA! Donna Clara!
Best-beloved for many a year long,
Thou hast worked my soul's destruction,
And hast worked it without pity.

"Donna Clara! on the morrow,
Will Fernando at the altar
Greet thee as his wedded consort,
Wilt thou bid me to the bridal?"

"Don Ramiro! Don Ramiro!
Cruel are thy words and bitter,
Crueller than the stars above us,
Mocking us with glitter stony.

"Don Ramiro! Don Ramiro!
Naught is left but to forget me.
Earth has many another maiden,
But we twain by God are sundered.

"Don Ramiro, in the combat,
Many a Moor thy sword hath conquered,
Conquer now this fatal passion,
Come to-morrow to my bridal."

"Donna Clara! Donna Clara!
Yes, I will be there, I swear it.
Tread with thee the dance's mazes.
Now, goodnight. I come to-morrow."

"Farewell, friend." She closed the lattice,
But beneath Ramiro lingered,

Lingered long like one enchanted,
Till the darkness fell and hid him.

Soon the east-grey changed to crimson,
Slowly broke the bridal-morning,
Like a garden, starred with blossoms,
Was the town of fair Toledo.

Look! and watch the throng of people
Streaming from the Virgin-Chapel,
Floral arches are above them,
And their feet crush summer roses.

Knights in armour, lovely women,
Walk in festival procession,
And the bells ring out their music,
And the organ tones between them.

Who are these who cross the portal,
While the crowd gives way before them?
'Tis the new-made wife and husband,
Donna Clara, Don Fernando.

To the bridegroom's stately palace,
Onward pass the guests and enter,
Where the wedding-banquet waits them,
After the old princely fashion.

Knightly game and joyful music
Fill the hall with jest and pleasure,
And they wear the hours in revel
Till the night comes down upon them.

For the dance at last assemble
In the hall the guests and kinsmen,
On the wall the silver sconces
Flash and gleam, and shine and glitter.

On the dais, bride and bridegroom
Sit and watch the crowd together,
Donna Clara, Don Fernando—
Ah! the magic in "Together."

"Wherefore is it, O my darling,
That you ever bend your glances,

On the window's deep embrasure?"
Said the bridegroom, half in wonder.

"Seest thou not, Don Fernando,
Yonder form in sable mantle?"
Playfully he smiles, and answers,
"Darling, it is but a shadow!"

But the shadow nears them closely,
'Tis a guest in sable mantle.
Don Ramiro keeps his promise—
Clara greets him, blushing scarlet.

"I will join the dancers' circle,
As I promised, Don Ramiro,
Yet this mantle long and night-black
Scarce is suited for a wedding."

With a gaze that chills and freezes,
Don Ramiro looks upon her,
Clasps her slender waist, and whispers,
"I have come, and at thy bidding."

With the waltzers whirling round them
They have mixed, we lose their figures,
And the music shrilleth louder,
Till the rafters shake and quiver.

"Why! thy cheeks are pale as sea-foam,"
Whispers Clara, half a-tremble.
"I have come, and at thy bidding!"
Says the voice that was her lover's.

"Ah! thy hand is cold and deathly,"
Murmurs Clara, pale and shuddering.
"I have come, and at thy bidding!"
Are the only words vouchsafed her.

"Leave me, leave me. All thy garments
Breathe the odour of the charnel."
"I have come, and at thy bidding!"
And the voice is choked and hollow.

"Leave me, leave me, Don Ramiro!"
But the crowd grows ever thicker;

Don Ramiro answers only,
"I have come, and at thy bidding!"

"In the name of God I charge thee!"
Clara shrieks her adjuration,
And the word was hardly spoken
When the phantom lover left her.

Clara hardly knew it. Fainting,
Sunk she powerless, sick and swooning,
For a time her senses left her,
And she lay in deathlike semblance.

Yet at last her eyelids open,
And she lifts her long black lashes,
Screams in terror and amazement,
Falls again in faintness backward.

Still the waltzers float around her,
Still the music shrills and quivers,
Still she sits beside her bridegroom,
And the knight is asking anxious,

"Wherefore are thy cheeks so pallid?
Wherefore are thine eyes so troubled?"
"And Ramiro?" stammered Clara,
Looking at him with strange horror.

But a frown of fearful meaning
Blackened on the bridegroom's forehead.
"Askest thou his fate, fair mistress?
Six hours since died Don Ramiro."

—*(Heine.)*

PROMETHEUS.

COVER thine heaven, O Zeus,
With thy cloud-darkness;
As a child, careless,
Scatters the thistles,
Break thou thy forests,
Still shall my earth to me
Rest yet unmoved,
My hut, which thou builtest not,

And my hearth-corner,
Whose crimson light-glow
Godhead has envied.

Naught hold I poorer
Than ye, the Immortals ;
Happy alone are ye
When, from the sacrifice,
Blood-steam floats upward,
Prayers mingle with it ;
Say, would your Godhood
Vanish for ever,
If beggar and childhood
Were not fooled by it?

Ah, in my childhood,
In my child-foolishness,
Turned I eyes heavenward,
As if in heaven were
Ear that would hearken,
Heart such as mine is,
Earth's children to pity.

Who was mine helper,
In fight with the Titans?
Through mine own strength and power
Hell's brood was vanquished;
Yet, in mine ignorance,
Did I not praise the Gods,
While, on Olympus,
Kronion was slumbering?

Honour thee? Wherefore?
Hast thou their sorrows
Ever made lighter
To the o'erladen?
Hast thou been tear-dryer
E'er of the troubled?
They twain mine helpers are—
Time, the allpowerful,
And Fate everlasting,
My Lord and thy Lord.

Didest thou dream, O Fool,
I should, in hate of life,

Flee to the deserts,
When not all youthful
Blossom-dreams ripened?

Here sit I, forming,
After mine image,
Men like unto me,
To weep and to suffer,
To joy and rejoice them,
And thee not to honour—
Yea, to despise

—*(Goethe.)*

ALTERATION.

"*Es liegt der heise Sommer.*"

You scorn both love and lover,
The poet and his art,
The summer is upon thy cheeks,
The winter in thine heart.

Sweetheart, these things will alter.
Before we twain shall part,
Shall winter be upon thy cheeks,
And summer in thine heart.

—*(Heine.)*

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

(Answered by Sophocles.—Œdipus Coloneus.)

FOOLISH is he that strives for length of days:
For length of days casts darkness on the soul,
Through which we grope after all lovely things,
We know so near, but hidden and unseen.
We long, back falls the longing unfulfilled,
For at the end black Death and Hades stand,
The lyre falls broken from our powerless clasp,
Neither can warm limbs thrill against our own.
Far better ne'er to clasp our hold on Life,
And the one blessing given to each and all,
To loose the clasp, and greet the end, sweet Death.

Youth fills our hands with troubles, friends stand up
Against us, battle, murders, envy, quarrel,
And then comes age, and crowns all sorrow's cup ;
Like some dark stormlashed rock the old man stands,
And all seas shatter on him, for his griefs
Are like the wild white-crested waves that come,
Some from daybreaking, some from set of sun,
Some from the sunless land where light strikes not.

ONE WORD.

("Ich wollt', meine schmerzen ergössen.")

If I could but put my sorrow
  Into one word to-day,
I would give it in trust to the winds of heaven,
  To bear it far away.

They should bear to thee, belovèd,
  That word, and its bitter pain,
Thou shouldst hear it in joy and sorrow,
  In sunshine, and in rain.

And from thy nightly slumber,
Thou shouldst waken with a scream,
For the word I speak should haunt thee,
Ay, in thy deepest dream.

HECTOR'S FAREWELL.

Andromache speaks—

"WILL my Hector turn him where for ever
Peleus' son, with hands that shred and sever,
To Patroclus fearful offering brings?
Who shall teach thy young Astyanax
Spear to poise, and wield the two-edged axe
When thy soul its flight to Hades wings?"

Hector speaks—

"Idle fears, sweet wife, thy soul are thronging,
To the fighting-field streams out my longing,
Arms of mine are shield to Pergamus.

Fighting for the Holy Hearth and Altar
Fall I; still with soul that cannot falter,
Sink I downward to the Stygian hush."

Andromache speaks—

"Never shall I list thy weapons' clanging,
On the bright blade at thy side now hanging
Rust shall gather, and thick dust shall lie.
Wilt thou go where no friend-voice thee haileth,
Where Cocytus through the darkness waileth,
Where thy love in Lethe's stream shall die?"

Hector speaks—

"All my longing will I, all my thinking,
The dark depth of Lethe's stream let sink in;
But *my* love—not so.
Hark the clang! the Greeks our walls are scaling,
Gird my hero-sword on, cease thy wailing,
Hector's love shall die in Lethe? No."

WHAT MORE?

("Du hast Perlen und Diamanten.")

THOU hast both pearls and diamonds,
Hast all thy sex adore,
And the fairest eyes that gleam on earth.
O Love! what would you more?

To those eyes of thine, my darling,
I have written many a score
Of songs that will last for ever;
O Love! what would you more?

Thou, with those eyes so lovely,
Hast tortured me so sore,
That my life is crushed and ruined—
O Love! what would you more?

—*(Heine.)*

THE PARTING OF THE EARTH.

ZEUS, bending, spake from the blank height of heaven,
"Take here my world, ye new-born race of men.
Throughout the ages it to you is given,
I claim it not again."

The acres-man seized the fair land for tillage,
Men ploughed the barren heath,
The robber from his eyrie looked for pillage,
O'er the wide field beneath.

The grapes hung purpling o'er the barren ridges,
Priests pressed the blood-red wine,
The King barred roads, and spanned the floods with bridges,
Then spake, "The tenth is mine."

Slowly was conquered the brute-force resistant,
Parted and shared the whole;
From the far northern climes, where dark and distant
Ice seas gird round the Pole,

To the Ægean, with its blue waves lashing
On the unfruitful beach,
Each claimed his right, and the bright sword out-flashing,
Guarded the rights of each.

Long after, when the sharing-time was hidden
By mists of ancient time,
The Poet walked on earth, a guest unbidden,
None listened to his rhyme.

"Woe! is it for my sin, or through my failing,
Shareless am I alone?"
So loud he wailed, and cast himself down, wailing,
Before Kronion's throne.

"My earth is given away to the strong-hearted,
All right of mine is dead;
Where wert *thou* when the earth was shared and parted?"
"With thee!" the Poet said.

"When strife and rancour o'er the whole earth darkened,
Say, was it sin in me,

That I, who hung upon thy lips and hearkened,
  Thought not of aught but thee?"

"What shall I do?" spake Zeus, "for mine no longer
  Are earth and whispering sea;
Shareless art thou? Thy share in me is stronger,
  My heaven stands ope for thee."

—*(Schiller.)*

IN THE STAGE-COACH.

("Wir fuhren allein im dunkeln.")

We drove alone in the darksome
  Post-waggon all the night,
And the hours fled past and past us,
  With jest and laughter bright.

But twain sat there at midnight,
  At dawning three we were;
Between was Cupid sitting,
  Unnoticed passenger.

—*(Heine.)*

THE BURIAL OF LOVE.

("Die alten bosen Lieder.")

My songs that have stirred the nation
  To its passionate heart of thought
Are dead to the soul of their singer,
  Let a coffin now be brought.

I will lay my dead within it
  At the darkest hour of night,
I will kiss them, with soft slow kisses,
  And shut them from my sight.

Bring me a death-bier hither,
  Made of white Norway pine;
See that its planks be longer
  Than the bridge that spans the Rhine.

Send me twelve giant-bearers,
  And each must stronger be

Than the holy saint, St Christopher.
They must enter silently,

And lifting the coffin, cast it
Into the salt sea-wave,
For the burden that they carry
Has need of such a grave.

Well may they plunge the coffin
So deep beneath the tide,
For it holds the love of my manhood
And my sorrow, side by side.

—*(Heine.)*

VOITURE'S RONDEAU.

(This is considered a French chef-d'œuvre, for it adds to the difficulty of the form, the description of the poet's struggles. I know of only one other poem of the same style, the famous Spanish "Sonnet to Violante.")

GRACIOUS, all's up with me, for Isabeau
Has ordered me to write her a rondeau;

There's not the slightest use to weep and wail,
But such an order makes a fellow quail;
I'm sure to make a mess of it, I know,
But if I can't oblige her, *how* she'll crow!
Ah, this is cheering. Six are writ, I trow,
Seven are to do. My spirit's getting low,
But who at such a task would not turn pale?
If I could only coax this rhyme to go,
The next would easily be settled; so
I'll try my best. Why! I can only fail.
(But don't I wish I never had begun!)
Now, the next line completes at length the tale,
At last I'm at the end of all my woe!
Thank heaven, I'm done.

—*(Adapted from Voiture.)*

ON THE STAGE.

("Ich war ein Konig der Bretter.")

I WAS a third-rate actor,
A "lover" on the stage;

Few men are wise at twenty,
  And twenty was my age.

My rôle was Schiller's "Mortimer";
  "Maria" was so fair,
That I played love-scenes in earnest—
  She laughed, and did not care.

You know the hero's death-scene?
  That was my weakest part;
But *once* I played it well—I sheathed
  The dagger in my heart.

—*(Heine.)*

CONSOLATION.

I.

LONGING and thinking,
Cowardly heart-sinking,
Faint-hearted failing,
Woman-like wailing,

From sorrow of parting,
Set thee not free.

If thou Fate's science
Hold at defiance,
Yield to it never,
But face it for ever,
So Zeus the Immortal
Descendeth to thee.

II.

Still are the winds,
  Still are the waves,
The living are silent,
  The dead in their graves.
The birds are quiet,
  Each in his nest.
Wait thou. Soon
  Thou shalt rest.

—*(Goethe.)*

THE MIGHT OF WOMEN.

VERILY, mighty are ye, and rule us through some enchantment,
Guide us through gracious gentleness, win us through very stillness.
Strength is the glory of man. But he asks in his partner
Sweetness, not strength of soul; womanliness, and not wisdom.

Truly, many have ruled through their poet-splendour of spirit,
Yet have they missed, and failed in, the highest beauty of woman.
Woman is crowned alone by womanly beauty and silence,
Rules men's hearts at her will, but opes not her lips in the ruling.

(Schiller.)

THE DOVES.

THERE, on the hillside, in the hazy distance,
  A palm-tree rears its crest,
Within the shady covert of whose branches
  White doves at nightfall rest.

They hold them still, and nestle through the darkness,
  But, with the dawn of light,
Flutter a moment in the air, like snow-flakes,
  Then, slowly, take their flight.

My soul is like the tree: and, at the sunset,
  White flocks of foolish dreams
Alight, and make night lovely, then pass from me,
  With the first morning-beams.

—*(Theophile Gautier.)*

IN PARIS TOWN.

PARIS was dreary that autumn day,
The King was gone, and the Court away,
Life, like the skies, was dull and grey,
  The wind was chill, and the leaves were brown,
And things were much the reverse of gay,
  In Paris town.

But I saw a maiden pass in the street,
  Quaker-like in her russet gown,
Plain, with never a frill nor pleat,
Treading the pavement with small white feet,
But the day grew bright, and life grew sweet,
  In Paris town.

How did this love of ours begin?
My darling was not hard to win—
It was only a word, that broke her dream,
A tiny kiss, and a tiny scream,
And never a thought of ill between,
  In Paris town.

—*(Clement Marot.)*

THE STORY OF A NIGHT.

("Ein Traum gar seltsam schauerlich.")

YEARS since, in one long-vanished June,
When life was set to one sweet tune
Of love, I lay upon the grass,
Letting the sweet hours idly pass.

No human sound could reach me there,
Bird-voices filled the summer air,
A peace I scarce could understand
Rested on all the dreamy land.

Round me I cast one careless look,
Saw, bending o'er the lilied brook,
The beauty of a beauteous face
Make lovelier all that lovely place.

A maiden stood, with white arms bare,
And falling rippling golden hair,
Plunging her linen in the stream.
She seemed some poet-artist's dream.

The maiden sang an ancient rhyme,
Crooning a song of byegone time,
"Run, and ripple, brooklet bright,
Wash my linen clean and white."

Moved by a thought I may not name,
I rose, and to her side I came,
And lightly spoke, "O damsel! say
Whose the white robe you wash to-day."

Then spake she quick: "Be ready soon.
Thy shroud I wash beneath the moon."
And, ere the words had stricken home,
The maiden disappeared like foam.

The garden vanished. Next I stood
In the dark shadows of a wood.

Dark pines shut out the sky above
With boughs that bore the nesting dove

I listened. And upon the breeze
Came an axe-sound, and crash of trees.
Striving by ear the sound to trace,
I found at length an open space.

Between me and the summer sky
A giant oak-tree towered on high,
And there the maiden of my dream
Stood, still the sweeter did she seem.

As the axe rose and fell, each blow
Went to song-cadence soft and low ;
"Soon shall thou slake thy thirst to slay.
Good steel, I love thy work this day !"

I pressed my lips upon her brow.
"Ah, tell me, fairest, wherefore now
You labour through the noon-tide heat.
Whose is the coffin at my feet ?"

"Well need I work. The time is short.
Of thine own coffin mak'st thou sport.'
And, ere the words had stricken home,
The maiden disappeared like foam.

The forest vanished. And, beneath
My eyes, an eerie, darkened heath
Lay, ghastly in the evening light;
I shuddered at the dreary sight.

One figure turned, on that lone wold,
The clods, red-rank like blood-soaked mould;
Scarce did I dare to draw anear,
She was so lovely, yet a Fear.

Still on the ear her singing came,
The words were changed, the tune the same;
"Spade, our work is wellnigh done,
The grave-mouth gapes, I ween, for *one*."

Forgetting all things but her charms,
I held her beauty in my arms;

"Dearest, what may this singing mean?
What means this grave that yawns between?"

Then spoke she slow—"Be still, nor rave,
Here at thy feet lies thine own grave."
And, as she spoke, her lips were blue,
And the sweet eyes, hell's fire shone through.

With horror that I cannot tell,
I tore myself from her, and fell
Into the grave with one wild scream,
That woke me from my ghastly dream.

—*(Heine.)*

HER SONG FOR HIM.

("Ich will meine seele tauchen.")

My soul will I breathe, Belovèd,
In some fair white lily's cup,
And ever from it at evening,
Shall a song of my love float up.

The song shall be shut through daytime,
In the golden heart of the flower,
As my heart holds the kiss you gave me,
Once, at the evening hour.

—*(Heine.)*

POSEIDON.

"*Die Sonnenlichter spielten.*"

THE sunrays sparkled
On the sea-surface,
Where the white sails
Of the ship were glancing,
The ship which should bear me
To mine own land.

Waiting its sailing,
On the dark sea-strand,
Lonely I tarried,

Reading the story
That, through the ages,
Shines like a star—
The Song of Odysseus,
Old, and yet young,
In deathless beauty.

Out of its pages
The breath of the Gods
Rose to my brain;
The spring of the world,
And the heaven of Hellas,
Seemed all about me.

And my soul went with
The son of Laertes,
In his wide wandering,
Saw him sitting,
Tortured in spirit,
Upon the hearth,
Where queens were spinning
The purple wool.

With him I saw the
Virginal vision
Of Nausicaa,
Areté's daughter,
The sweetest maiden
Of poet-story.

With him escaped from
The cave of the Cyclops,
And arms of Circe
More deathly still.
Down into Hades
Followed his footsteps;
In storm and in shipwreck
Suffered his peril.

Sobbing, I spake,
"Truly, Poseidon,
Thy wrath is fearful.
Say, wilt thou also
Pour out its vials
On my home-journey?

Scarce ceased I speaking,
When, from the ocean,
Rose, crowned with seaweed,
The head of the sea-god.
Scornfully spoke he—

"Fear not, O Poet,
I will not injure
The vessel that bears thee.
Neither shall shake thy soul
Storm of my raising.
Wherefore against thee
Should I keep anger?
Thou art no hero
Who, 'gainst the city of
Ashen-speared Priam,
Warred with Achaians.
Neither has Pallas,
Goddess of wisdom,
Stood as thy champion
In my defiance."

So said Poseidon,
Sunk in the ocean;
From under the water
A silvery laugh-peal
Rippled upward.
In their sea-caverns
The Naiads were laughing.

—*(Heine.)*

THEIR WEDDING TOUR.

"TELL me, my bonnie darling,
Whither our ship shall go,
For our love can know no quarrelling,
And the breeze begins to blow.

"The oar is ivory carven,
The flag is all of velvet,
And the helm is all of gold.

A rosebud is the ballast,
And the ship-bell, made of silver,
By a seraphim is tolled.

"Tell me, my bonnie darling,
Whither our ship shall go,
For our love can know no quarrelling,
And the breeze begins to blow.

"Would you wish to sail the Baltic,
Or, in the far Pacific,
Watch the coral-groves below?
Or, on the hills of Norway,
Search with those dainty fingers
For flowers beneath the snow?

"Tell me, my bonnie darling,
Whither our ship shall go,
For our love can know no quarrelling,
And the breeze begins to blow."

"You must take me," said my darling,
"To some distant land, where lovers
May walk always hand-in-hand."
"But you see, my pet, this country
Has never been, but only
In the old-time story-land."

—*(Theophile Gautier.)*

THE FEAST OF VICTORY.

CEASED now were Priam's banquets,
Ilion's flames had flickered down,
Now the fair-haired Greeks, surrounded
By the plunder of the town,
Sat upon the high-prowed vessels,
On the Hellespontine strand,
Ready for the home-returning
To their far-off Grecian land.

And, in huddled groups of anguish,
  Sat the Trojan maidens there,
Smiting on their breasts, and wailing,
  With dishevelled golden hair.
In their conquerors' feast of victory
  Rose the captives' wail and moan,
Who but saw, through flames of Ilion.
  One belovèd face alone.

To the high Gods of Olympus,
  Kalchas offereth victims now,
To the Builder and Destroyer,
  Grey-eyed Pallas, pays his vow,
And to Him, who, round the nations,
  His wave-girdle closely slings,
And to Zeus, the Terror-sender,
  Who he Ægis-horror swings.

Atreus' son, the people's shepherd,
  Counted o'er the people's tale,
Who had round his standard gathered,
  Once in fair Scamander's vale.

And the cloud of dark remembrance
  Blackened on the monarch's brow,
Many lay by Xanthus' river,
  Few would cross Scamander now.

Far in Argos, Clytemnestra
  Listens to Ægisthus' sighs,
At the threshold of Atrides,
  Murder waits with awful eyes.
"Some shall fall beneath the dagger,
  On whose crests swords splintered vain."
So half-jesting, spoke Odysseus,
  With a glimpse of future pain.

In the purple tent, a maiden
  Lay upon Atrides' breast,
Round the blossom of her body,
  Closer yet his arms he pressed.
Outrage followeth ever outrage,
  Vengeance treads the heel of Lust.
In the Heaven-height rules the judgment
  Of Kronion. He is just.

"Well the happy it beseemeth,"
  Oileus' son spake with a groan,
"When they praise Kronion's justice,
  Ruling on the Heaven-throne.
Nay, the Gods give gifts, unheeding
  Of the longing or the lack,
For Patroclus lieth buried,
  But Thersites cometh back.

"On the wall the Telamonian
  Shield gleams in the crimson light;
Present is thy memory with us
  O my brother! Tower in fight!
When the Grecian ships were blazing,
  In the arm of Ajax lay
Help and hope. But this Odysseus
  Wears the arms *he* sought, to-day."

To their greatest Dead, Achilles,
  Neoptol'mus pours the wine.
"Telamon is worthy praising.
  Father, highest praise is thine.

Greatest gifts are fame and valour,
  Of the gifts the Gods can give,
Thou art dust with thy Patroclus,
  But thy name for aye shall live."

"If the voice of song is silent
  O'er the dead and conquered man,
So will I speak up for Hector,"
  Tydeus' warlike son began,
"He who, for his hearth and altar,
  Fighting, the Defender, fell,
Shall not be forgot in singing
  When the bards Troy's story tell."

Nestor then, the ancient warrior,
  Who three generations saw,
Reached the laurel-crownèd beaker,
  To the crownless Hecuba.
'Drink, the wine foams in the chalice,
  Drink, forget all sorrow's smart.
Wonderful the gifts of Bacchus,
  Balsam for the riven heart."

By Apollo's spirit driven,
  Rose Cassandra from her seat,
From the black ships downward glancing,
  Ruined Troy lay at her feet.
"Smoke is all existence earthly ;
  As its columns melt away,
So shall die Achilles, Hector—
  But the Gods endure for aye."

—(*Schiller.*)

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